

**University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force**  
**July 25, 2006, 5 p.m.**  
**Martin Luther King Center**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Task Force members present:** Reggie Aligada (co-chair), Julie Causey (co-chair), Veronica Burt, Betty Charles, James Erkel, Joan Grzywinski, Courtney Henry, Seitu Jones, Richard Kleinbaum, Juan Linares, Byron Moore, Nieeta Presley, Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Robert Straughn, Mai Thor, Bao Vang, Anne White, Brian Winkelaar

**Task Force members absent:** Vatou Her

**Staff present:** Melvin Carter, Donna Drummond, Shawntera Hardy, Va-Megn Thoj, Sarah Zorn

**Others present:** Janice Goldstein, Commissioner Janice Rettman, Alicia Vap, Jo Haberman, Bernie Hesse, Jane McClure, Monique Mackenzie, Dan Kravetz, Denise Fosse, Triesta Brown

The meeting was called to order by co-chairs Reggie Aligada and Julie Causey. Reggie welcomed everyone and expressed his appreciation of the bus tour that took place last month. He also indicated that staff would be happy to arrange an individual tour for task force members who had not able to attend the bus tour.

Reggie then asked all in attendance to introduce themselves, including audience members.

Russ Stark, Director, Midway TMO (Transportation Management Organization), gave a PowerPoint presentation on a recent parking study conducted by his office. The study analyzed the utilization of parking at a few key sites along University Avenue. Russ found that the rate of utilization for most of the sites was approximately 45 percent. Russ stated that, in general, the City's current parking requirements may be too high and are in need of being studied. In particular, he stated that big box retailers have more parking than needed which may be due to desire for customers to perceive that parking is easy to find at that particular location. Parking requirements for office space are closer to the need.

Task force members asked several follow-up questions, which Russ and staff responded to. Most of the questions focused on how much we should reduce parking requirements and supply; how do we handle the demand for park and ride when LRT is built; the need to look at other parking alternatives such as shared parking; and what other organizations should be aware of this study. Given the various questions regarding TN (traditional neighborhood) zoning standards, PED staff will provide a fact sheet on the City's zoning requirements.

Brian McMahon, Executive Director, University UNITED, provided an overview of his organization's studies, projects and advocacy efforts related to University Avenue including: Midway property tax study; Midway transportation report; report on potential housing sites along University; Dickerman Park; block by block design charrettes; marketing/branding efforts; and advocacy related to CVS, Target, Aldi's, and the Ford building. Some key points that Brian highlighted included:

- Midway Books has no off-street parking so is very concerned about losing parking due to LRT. University UNITED did a design charrette for that block and came up with several schemes for shared parking.
- There are a variety of ways to re-use / re-invent older buildings, particularly big box.
- In Saint Paul, approximately 80 percent of property taxes are paid by residential properties.
- Brian stated that national chains will pay almost twice as much for property per square foot as local buyers – yet the county assessor is not assessing them at the price that they paid. This trend is pricing local businesses out of the area.

Task force members asked several follow-up questions, which Brian and staff responded to. Some of these focused on: understanding that the County determines the assessed value of a property, and the three main taxing jurisdictions(city, county, school district) determine what tax rate to apply to the assessed value; that in recent years the County assessor has shifted a greater percentage of the total value of commercial properties along University to the land value; that new building improvements result in higher assessed values, which should reduce the overall tax burden on other properties; and the need to look at the big picture when understanding tax policy.

PED staff stated that despite the concern about increases in property taxes, property improvements in general are good for the community and increased value is a sign of an economically healthy community.

PED staff will place both Russ and Brian's presentations on the Central Corridor website.

Donna Drummond, PED planning staff, provided an overview of Property tax valuation and assessment information.

The task force members concluded by discussing the schedule and process including, the upcoming focus group discussions and the next steps for fall meetings.

The next meetings of the Task Force are as follows:

- Aug. 1 – 3:
  - Focus group interviews with the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force and others in the community.
- Tues., Aug. 22, 5 p.m.:

- Concordia University. Dr. Bruce Corrie - World Cultural Heritage District initiative; and Mike Temali, Neighborhood Development Center - University Avenue small business development, Midtown Global Market.
- Sept. 14-16:
  - Task Force and Public Open House/Workshop Events.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

*Meeting summary prepared by Shawntera Hardy, PED planning staff.*